

Introduction

TRICKS OF THE MICROSOFT WINDOWS MASTERS

“We learned a lot during the Vista [process]. People can see how we’ve mixed together our Office talent and Windows talent to get the best of both worlds, and how we’re going to do things going forward.”

—Bill Gates, interview with Steven Levy for *Newsweek* (February 1, 2007)

Did you know that it is often necessary to sift through 250 to 400 tons of rock, gravel, and sand to mine a one carat diamond? And once a diamond is found, it must be cut precisely by a craftsman and polished to bring out the shine we all appreciate. In the case of diamonds, they must be both “discovered in the rough” and “crafted into an object of beauty” before placed before us in a showcase.

The same is true of the gems you'll find within this book. We scoured the earth, sifting from among "masters" of the Vista operating system until we discovered the finest points we could. Then we put them together and shined them up so that you hold in your hands a truly impressive collection. The tips and tricks we've put together include group policy edits, shortcut keys, security settings, and more. We even review some of the more important new features of Vista such as Parental Controls, Windows Meeting Space, and BitLocker technology so you'll be completely up-to-date on all that Vista has to offer.

Sometimes this book contains a tip or trick; sometimes it provides the background material from Microsoft developers on how and why a tool was developed and how it can be used to increase your productivity; and yet other times we simply present the facts of what Vista can do. In the event you buy only one book on Windows Vista, you are holding all you need.

Why sift through 1,500-page volumes on Vista or hundreds of web blogs when we've already done it for you and collected exactly what you're looking for? As you thumb through the Table of Contents, you'll notice that we have grouped our tips and tricks by categories that will make finding what you need easy. Best of all, each point is concise so there is no need to waste valuable time reading through fluff or dull material—only clarity.

All that being said, we truly hope you enjoy the tricks within. It's in no way exhaustive—there are always more gems to be found in the world of Microsoft. But this is as comprehensive a collection of Vista knowledge as you're likely to find in print.

Who Are the Vista Masters?

This book includes many, many quotes and tricks from outside sources. I contacted Microsoft developers, fellow authors and trainers, Internet bloggers, and experts in their fields and asked permission to quote them. Some of the developers at Microsoft even took the time to read portions of the book to confirm its quality and accuracy. To all of them I'd like to say thank you.

Here is a list of the major contributors to the book. There are even more inside:

- Jeff Atwood, a Microsoft Windows developer since 1992, for his tips on the blog site www.codinghorror.com
- Jon Hicks, deputy editor of the *Official Vista Magazine*, along with Paul Douglas, editor of *Vista Magazine* (<http://www.windowsvistamagazine.co.uk/>)

- Chris Holmes, a Vista blogger and tech guru (along with Dena Reiter and Kristan Kenney) for their tricks and insight at www.chris123nt.com
- Terri Stratton, Microsoft MVP, is the publisher and news editor of “The Tablet PC” website at <http://thetabletpc.net/>
- Tim Sneath, group manager, client platform evangelism, Microsoft, for his blog site <http://blogs.msdn.com/tims/>
- Josh Phillips (founder of enthusiast website WindowsConnected.com)
- Long Zheng, one of the most respected Vista bloggers, at <http://www.istartedsomething.com>
- Tony Campbell, for his great blog site at <http://vista.beyondthemanual.com/>, as well as his work with Jonathan Hassell on the book *Windows Vista: Beyond the Manual* by Apress
- Alan Wright (technical guru and educator for many years, currently in the Detroit area), for his insight and research on Vista subject matter
- Ronald Barrett, director of information technology at ERE, an accounting and financial services firm in Manhattan, for his years as an IT professional specializing in a variety of fields, including security and Thin Client solutions
- Tim Grey, director of the Professional Photo Community at Microsoft (www.microsoft.com/prophoto/), for his knowledge on color management and digital imaging
- Michael Bourgoin, program manager at Microsoft for the Desktop and Graphics Technologies Color Team, for his in-depth insight into the world of color management
- Joli Ballew, a technology trainer and writer in the Dallas area with more than two dozen books to her credit (www.joliballew.com), for her blogging on Vista subject matter and her contribution to this book with information on parental control and speech recognition; she is also a contributor to the Microsoft Expert Zone at <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/expertzone/meetexperts/ballew.mspx>
- Michael Howard, Microsoft security developer, for reading over and contributing to the security information in Chapter 4, for his blog site http://blogs.msdn.com/michael_howard/default.aspx, and his books on SDL Lifecycle and his book *Writing Secure Code for Vista*
- Mark Minasi (www.minasi.com) for his newsletters, books, and seminars, which all include his acerbic wit and humor
- Ed Bott, author of the book *Special Edition Using Microsoft Office 2007* (and a list of other titles), for his in-depth coverage of Office and Vista in his books and on his website at www.edbott.com

- Timothy Duggan, network administrator at ERE and co-founder of ClipTraining.com, for his generosity and constant support on this project, as well as his technical knowledge
- John Walkenbach, Excel author, for his book *John Walkenbach's Favorite Excel 2007 Tips and Tricks*
- David Gainer, the group program manager for the Microsoft Excel team, for the team's blog site at <http://blogs.msdn.com/excel/default.aspx>
- Bill Jelen (www.mrexcel.com), for being an Excel guru and putting out so many books, videos, and clips on how to use Excel to its full extent
- Echo Swinford, for her great website about PowerPoint 2007 (<http://www.echosvoice.com/2007.htm>) and her latest book, *Fixing PowerPoint Annoyances*
- Bob Kelly, the founder of AppDeploy.com (a resource focused on desktop management products and practices), for his podcasts at <http://www.realtime-vista.com/podcast/>
- Greg Frost, program manager within the Core Windows Networking division, for his many great articles on the MSDN blog site at <http://blogs.msdn.com/wndp/> and his own personal blog site at <http://blog.gabefrost.com/>
- Mitch Tulloch, president of MTIT Enterprises (<http://www.mtit.com>), for his many outstanding articles regarding Vista and networking; Mitch is both a scholar and a gentleman, and we thank him for the contributions he has made to this work
- Brien M. Posey (www.brienposey.com), a technical author who has produced thousands of articles, tips, and whitepapers since 1995, for his insight into the future of networking
- James Bannan, technical writer for acpmag.com, for his articles on dual-boot with Vista and media sharing, which can be found on acpmag.com
- Daniel Nerenberg, an MCSA, an MCSE, an MCTS, and a consultant with a Montreal-based IT services firm who is the vice president of the Montreal IT pro user group (<http://www.mitpro.ca> and www.thelazyadmin.com)
- Bryant Likes, who has been developing applications on the Microsoft platform since 1996 and who currently works as a senior solution developer for Avanade, for his SQLXML blog at <http://blogs.sqlxml.org/bryantlikes>
- Ben Armstrong, the Virtual Machine Guy and program manager of the Virtual Machine Team at Microsoft (http://blogs.msdn.com/Virtual_PC_Guy/), for the help he has given toward understanding VHD files
- John Kellett (<http://www.johnkellett.co.uk>), for the information he provides on Performance Monitor
- David Solomon (www.solsem.com), for his incredible coverage of Windows architecture in the book *Microsoft Windows Internals, Fourth Edition*

- Parveen Patel, a developer on the WinRE team blog site (<http://blogs.msdn.com/winre/default.aspx>), for all the great information he provides on Vista recovery
- Mario Szpuszta, Microsoft developer in Austria (<http://blogs.msdn.com/mszCool>), for his information on creating a Windows PE disk
- James O' Neil, developer (<http://blogs.technet.com/jamesone/default.aspx>), for his assistance in creating a bootable USB drive with Windows PE
- Paul McFedries, the president of Logophilia Limited, for his book *Windows Vista Unleashed*
- Darren Mar-Elia, CTO and founder of SDM Software, Inc., a start-up focused on delivering innovative Group Policy management solutions (www.sdmsoftware.com)
- Jakob H. Heidelberg, an MCSE:Security/Messaging, MCDST, MCT, and CCNA who works as a system consultant for Interprise Consulting, a Microsoft Gold Partner based in Denmark, for the information regarding Group Policy changes in Vista http://www.windowsecurity.com/Jakob_H_Heidelberg/
- Derek Melber, the director of education and compliance solutions at DesktopStandard Corp., for his many books and articles over the years, especially those on Group Policy at windowsecurity.com; he is not only an excellent teacher, but I consider it a privilege to call him my friend
- Jeremy Moskowitz (<http://www.gpanswers.com>), for his Group Policy knowledge and teaching ability; I can honestly say he is one of the best speakers I've had the privilege to listen to, and he has been a good friend, as well. I appreciate knowing and working with him